



Tree Maintenance Guidelines (Minimum)

This information is provided by Authority of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources

To ensure success from your tree planting, the tree must be properly cared for after the initial planting. A properly maintained tree grows well, has less problems and provides many benefits to people and our environment. By following the three year maintenance guidelines, trees receive the care they need to become established. After the first three years, trees should be routinely inspected for problems and watered during dry spells.

Your tree should be planted according to the specifications in these planting guides...

- American National Standards Institute (ANSI)
- Tree City USA Bulletin No. 19 - How to Select and Plant a Tree
- DNR Tree Planting Guide (IC 4108)

The year after the tree is planted these specifications should be followed...

- **Water.** Check soil moisture a few inches below the surface in the root ball.
- **Mulch.** Layer 3 to 4 inches above the ground around the tree but not touching the tree trunk. The area should be four times the area of the root ball. Do not use treated or dyed mulch.
- **Prune** only if necessary. Follow specifications in the How to Prune Trees bulletin (NA-FR-01-95) and/or Tree City USA Bulletin No. 1 - How to Prune Young Shade Trees.
- **Stake** only if necessary. Follow the specifications on the Tree Planting Guide (IC 4108).
- **Check** for mower/weed whip damage, vandal damage and animal damage.
- **Check** for any insect or disease problems on the tree and surrounding trees. Contact a forester or arborist if a problem exists.
- **Do not** fertilize. Fertilizer applied to newly transplanted trees can excessively dry roots (burning).
- **Remove** all tags and twine from the tree to prevent girdling

The second year after the tree is planted...

- **Water.** Trees should be checked and watered. Monitor and water trees from spring to fall.
- **Mulch.** The area surrounding the tree must be re-mulched every spring to achieve the 3-4 inches depth.
- **Remove** any stakes and ties.
- **Prune** only if necessary. Follow specifications in the How to Prune Trees bulletin (NA-FR-01-95).
- **Check** for any insect or disease problems on the new trees and surrounding trees. Contact a forester or arborist if a problem exists.

The third year after the tree is planted...

- **Water.** Root systems are still being established and soil moisture needs to be checked on a regular basis from early spring to fall.
- **Re-mulch** trees in the spring.
- **Prune** if necessary. Remember to prune before the growing season starts.
- **Check** for any type of damage and make corrections.
- Trees may be **fertilized** in the spring if a need exists. Consult a forester or arborist before fertilizing.

Research has shown that it takes approximately three years for a transplanted tree to become well established on a new site. Maintaining a vigorous, healthy tree requires commitment well after the initial planting. The tree should have a healthy living environment and a structurally good form. Good form is obtained from quality planting stock, and importantly, from proper pruning. Your tree should be mulched, watered, free of insect and disease problems and should be protected from animal damage and lawn care equipment injury.